ADJOURNMENT MOTIONS.

President: Order, order. I have received notices of motions for adjournment which I now place before this honourable House. One is by Mr. K. S. Joseph :

> "I beg to move for the adjournment of the business of the House for discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance namely :— The situation created in the country by the failure of the monsoon and the consequent failure of crops.

STATEMENT.

> The monsoons have failed. There is considerable failure of crops throughout the country. Owing to the want of timely rains the seedling for the next crop could not be reared up ; and the chances are that the next crops may also fail. The questions of granting remission of tax, the revision of the system of commandeering paddy, the necessity to open relief centres and the necessity to increase the production of food grains and other food-stuffs by throwing open new areas have to be considered immediately.

The other is by Mr. N. Narayana Kurup :

> "I beg to move that the business of this House be adjourned to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance namely, the situation created and the loss resulted to the paddy cultivators of the new water-logged areas in the State for Chingom crop, due to the absence of rain, and the loss likely to result to the paddy cultivators of water-logged areas for Medom crop, due to the absence of rain and flooding in the paddy fields and to remind the Government of their duty to relax the rules of purchase of paddy, to increase the price of paddy and to give adequate concessions to the cultivators to induce the losing cultivators to take part in the "grow more food campaign" of the Government.

I have very reluctantly to rule these two motions out of order, because the failure of the monsoon and the consequent distress anticipated and already existing in the various parts of the country are not matters of recent occurrence, but lest it should be regarded or assumed that the Government are not alive to the gravity of the situation, I have to mention two matters for the consideration of this honourable House.

The first is that every member of this honourable House will have an opportunity during the Budget debate today and during the Land Revenue motion tomorrow or the day after to raise this very question. If the adjournment motions were to be discussed now it would consume practically two hours out of the period allowed for the discussion of the Budget or the discussion on the Grants. Therefore, it has been a general rule observed in this House and elsewhere, that just at the time of the Budget debate

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[President]

these matters, which can very properly be brought under discussion to elicit the appropriate replies from the Government are not moved. But apart from that, taking the substance of the matter itself, I may mention to this honourable House that I have a statement to make on that subject, and I proceed to do so.

This Government have observed with increasing apprehension the inadequacy of the rains in certain tracts which were regarded as the granary of the State. The result has been that there is a considerable short-fall in the matter of food production.

I shall deal with the steps taken by the Government so far as they relate to things outside the State. As soon as the Government became aware of the difficult situation, they brought the matter, through the honourable the Resident to the attention of the Government of India. It was pointed out that in the coming year, the amount of grain that is likely to be available to us by appropriation from our own arable areas will be only a fraction of what we might otherwise legitimately expect. We have therefore sent practically an S. O. S. to the Government of India to come to our aid at this juncture. We have also pointed out that it is necessary that they should supply to us the food-grains that the people here are accustomed to use. We have made it perfectly clear to the Government of India that the supply at this juncture of maize or millets or *bajra* will not adequately deal with the situation, although it must be admitted that in certain parts of the country Government are informed that *bajra* is more largely consumed now than it was before. We have therefore stressed the importance of the Government of India coming to our aid and making good our deficit by the supply primarily of rice and secondarily, if rice is not procurable, to that extent, the supply of wheat. We have pointed out that the supply of grains other than rice would be to deal with the situation very inadequately. That is so far as outside resources are concerned. I am glad to say that we have had the Secretary of the Food Department of the Government of India and the Special Food Officer of the Government of India in our midst. The Regional and the Deputy Regional Commissioners in charge of Food-Supply and Distribution also visited the State. They were taken round to inspect the fields in north, south and central Travancore and they have, I believe, satisfied themselves that what we put forward as an appeal '*ad misericordiam*' is not purely a fictitious one. There are evidence, that the case is a very very hard one indeed. We, therefore, expect that the Government of India will help us substantially.

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So far as conditions inside the State are concerned, the Government are perfectly prepared to give all the legitimate remissions that are called for. They are also prepared to give every indulgence to the cultivators and if people are hard put to it to start the cultivation now they will organise the cultivators in every way to start cultivation when the times begin to be propitious again. One thing, however, I must make clear. There is no point in asking or in expecting Government to change the system of their taking possession of every grain of rice that is grown in the State. In other words, this shortage of food-stuffs makes it more necessary, and not less so, for the Government to take charge of every grain of paddy that is grown in the country. It does not mean that Government are callous about the matter or that Government wish to starve the people, but Government must know how much they are able to get from inside the State. They must have accurate statistics in regard to that matter. They will give to every person the rationed quantity of food-stuffs. Every person, cultivator or non-cultivator, will get the rationed quantity of grain according to the rules laid down by the Government. These rules, as honourable members may recollect are the following : that a certain criterion has been laid down in regard to the cultivators. That criterion includes or takes into account the amount of grain necessary for the consumption of the cultivator, his servants paid in kind and other payments in kind made exigible from him. It also takes into account the demand of the manual workers, they being given fifty per cent. more than the normal rations. These rations will in the present condition of failure of crops have to be diminished, but on the other hand having regard to the general distress in the country and the necessity to keep up the vitality and strength of the people if we can possibly increase the rations in these times of scarcity, we will do so. At this juncture, we have a certain amount of rice and wheat with us. We shall not hoard it or store it merely against the difficult days to come. The times are so critical that we shall give or rather distribute as much of it to the people, as freely as we can possibly do. These are the matters which are engaging the attention of Government and they are most anxious to solve them. I take this opportunity to assure the honourable Members who have moved the adjournment motions that if their object was to invite the attention of Government to the urgency and the seriousness of the situation, the answer is that the Government, in co-operation with the public and assisted by their officers, are doing their utmost to relieve the need and are fully alive to their responsibilities and duties. In these circumstances, as I said under the Rules as they are at present, I have to rule out these two motions.

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